(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest lands.

(v) A net work of protected areas has been established.

(vi) Recently, Ministry has prepared a National Forests Action Plan to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people centered development through improvement in investment for conservation and development of forest resources.

Ecological degradation in coastal areas of Orissa

646. SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that illegal prawn culture on the coastal areas of Orissa has adversely affected the ecological balance of the area; and

(b) Whether Government have made any study on the aforesaid ecological degradation in those areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court, National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur, conducted an investigation regarding the adverse impacts of aquaculture on the coastal areas of various States, including Orissa.

Encroachment of forest areas in Orissa

647. SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that large areas of protected land meant for village forest have been illegally encroached by unscrupulous people in the coastal districts of Balasore, Bhadror, Vendrapara, Puri and Jagatsingpur in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and